



Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer ***Iowa's First Congressional District***

The Military Readiness and Cost Savings Act

Bill Summary:

The Military Readiness and Cost Savings Act would establish a National Center for Military Painter Training and Applied Research within the Department of Defense, benefitting all military branches as well as the National Guard, Reserve components, and Army Corps of Engineers. This research center would serve as a testing facility for the application of new paint coatings; partner with industry to assess the effectiveness and cost efficiency of various coatings; and develop new online and virtual reality teaching tools. Most importantly, it would help scale up military painter training and certification programs that have already proven effective so that more military painters can benefit. The work of this research center will improve military readiness, save the government money, and reduce the military's environmental impacts.

Background:

Corrosion of military equipment and infrastructure is expensive and impedes military readiness. According to a study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense Corrosion Policy and Oversight Office, corrosion costs the Department \$20.6 billion annually across all services, or 21 percent of the Department's total maintenance costs. Additionally, corrosion is responsible for 11 percent, or roughly 1.1 million, of all non-available days of Department assets.

The military has ways to reduce corrosion, but they are expensive. Chemical Agent Resistant Coatings (CARC), which help to protect military vehicles and equipment from chemical and biological weapons and severe environmental conditions that cause corrosion, can range in price from \$100 to \$800 per gallon. With approximately 3,760 assets of varying sizes painted at a typical Department depot each year, CARC coatings are a significant annual cost.

Military painter training and certification helps reduce waste and rework of military assets, reducing the costs associated with CARC application. For example, the Southwest Research Institute reports that one military painter training and certification provider helped Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, PA, use 8,100 fewer gallons of CARC per year, saving the depot \$500,000 each year through improved transfer efficiency and reduced rework.

The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act Senate Report included language recognizing the importance of military painter training, noting that "paint training programs can save the Department time and funding resources by using advanced technology and equipment along with hands-on training to effectively apply coatings and reduce waste. Additionally, increasing coating transfer efficiency and preventing corrosion and rework can improve asset readiness."

If you have any questions or would like to co-sponsor the bill, please email Alexander Laska in Congresswoman Finkenauer's office at Alexander.Laska@mail.house.gov



Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer
Iowa's First Congressional District

The Military Readiness and Cost Savings Act

Section-by-Section Summary:

Section 1. Short Title.

This section establishes the bill's short title as the "Military Readiness and Cost Savings Act."

Section 2. Findings.

This section presents several findings of Congress, including that:

- Congress has a history of recognizing the importance of preventing corrosion of military equipment and infrastructure;
- Corrosion is expensive and impedes military readiness, and the coatings that help protect military assets from corrosion are also expensive;
- Military painter training and certification helps reduce waste and rework of military assets, and investing in these programs helps improve military readiness, increases safety, and reduces costs;
- The need for anti-corrosion measures goes beyond the military and would benefit all of America's infrastructure; and
- Using trained and certified painters is the most effective way to ensure assets are truly protected from corrosion.

Section 3. National Center for Military Painter Training and Applied Research.

This section directs the Secretary of Defense to engage in a competitive bidding process and enter into a contract with an eligible institution to act as a National Center for Military Painter Training and Applied Research. The selected institution should already have experience in providing and scaling up military painter training and certification programs. The section outlines the functions of the Center, including but not limited to testing the application and efficacy of new anti-corrosion coatings, expanding training and certification programs, developing new teaching tools, and conducting outreach to servicemembers to raise awareness of military painter career opportunities and related industrial and commercial painting apprenticeship opportunities. The Center is required to report annually to the Department of Defense on its progress.

This section clarifies that the programs should benefit all facilities of the Department of Defense, including the armed forces, reserve components and National Guard, and the Army Corps of Engineers. It also ensures the Coast Guard can benefit from these programs even if it is not housed under the Department of Defense.

The section authorizes \$2 million for Fiscal Year 2020 and \$3 million for each of Fiscal Years 2021 through 2023.

If you have any questions or would like to co-sponsor the bill, please email Alexander Laska in Congresswoman Finkenauer's office at Alexander.Laska@mail.house.gov